No Studying Required:
Dr. Sara’s Top 10 Hormone Tests
The Hormone Cure

Top 10 Hormone Tests

I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: what you measure improves.

That’s not my original idea but a central concept of sacred biohacking and, oh, one Lord Kelvin (1824-1907). I’m paraphrasing him but you get the idea.

From Lord Kelvin to Your Sevens

If you want to go on a trip from out of whack to back on track, listen up. I know you’re tired.

You can’t start improving something until you know where you stand, below is a list of the tests I most commonly recommend for my integrative medicine patients. Once you get the test results, you’ll know the areas that need the most improvement, and where you should start applying The Gottfried Protocol. Like KT says...

Suddenly I see
This is what I wanna be
Suddenly I see
Why the hell it means so much to me?

- KT Tunstall, “Suddenly I See”

The tests I’ve listed are in rank order, just in case you’re having trouble deciding where to start.

1. Blood Panel

Blood tests speak the language of conventional physicians, so I typically start with blood (and try to build a bridge). Ask your doctor to order:

- VAP cholesterol [This is extensive and includes subtypes of LDL and HDL plus lipo(a), VLDL], ferritin, TSH, free T3, reverse T3, cortisol, DHEA

If you’re overweight: leptin, insulin. IGF-1 (growth hormone)

If you’re infertile: free, bioavailable and total testosterone, progesterone day 21-23, fasting insulin and glucose.

2. If your doctor won’t order these tests, consider going to CanaryClub.org

Order yourself and test at home. I especially like their blood spot test because the little thyroid hormones are very stable when dried on their test cards, and I suspect more stable than sitting around all day in a test tube at a lab. If you can afford it, I recommend the Advanced Plus Hormone Profile.

3. Omega-6/Omega-3 ratio

It costs only $150 and is offered from Metagenics. You can also get this done as part of the NutrEval (#5 below). If you are having new symptoms of ADD in perimenopause, get this test. Omega 3s are one of the most proven supplements we have yet most people don’t optimize their level.
4. Complete Hormone Profile

If your doctor is the more open-minded type, check this Genova test. It will tell you about your adrenals, both short-and long-term, and inform you of your estrogen metabolism – that is, do you have a modifiable tendency toward breast cancer or not?

5. Let NutrEval Rock Your World

For those of you who really love to measure everything, and want to know where your nutritional deficiencies are...consider your prayers answered: http://www.gdx.net/product/10051. The cost is reasonable for people with insurance who qualify for Genova’s Pay Assured program at $169. Add on Vitamin D for $5.

6. Mercury Rising?

I commonly see women with fatigue, hair loss, weight gain, low sex drive and underperforming thyroids. I encourage them to test for mercury from Mercout.com.

7. Telomeres, My Telomeres

For those soul sisters who delight in quantifying biological age, the best marker is your telomeres, the cute little caps on your chromosomes that keep your chromosomes from unraveling and are similar to shoelace caps. Get those telomeres tested at Spectracell.com.

8. Neuroendocrine Fun and Games

Finally, for women in perimenopause with the usual suspects of more stress/irritability/waning libido & focus, one of my favorite tests is the Neuroendocrine 3 panel (9505) from Neuroscience. This tests looks at the intersection of your hormones with your neurotransmitters. It’s very satisfying, and it generates a personalized amino-acid balancing protocol. This test is excellent for women trying to get off antidepressants, sleeping pills or anxiety medication.

9. Pathway Fit

The Pathway Fit test gives you a personalized look into your genetic code. It analyzes your metabolism, eating habits, and the way your body responds to exercise. The test, along with a lifestyle questionnaire, tells you how to optimize your diet, workouts and lifestyle for a strong metabolism. Talk about a tailored weight loss plan!

10. Genova - Menopause + (google + link to it)

The Menopause Plus test by Genova Diagnostics will test your melatonin and cortisol levels, as well as your estrogen and progesterone. What I like about this test is that they’ll test your estrogen and progesterone over three days for a more accurate result. Let’s get those sex hormones rocking again!

Is that an overwhelming list? As I love to say...take baby steps. Just start at the top end and work your way down slowly and methodically, asking yourself if the information is helping your process toward becoming as vital as you desire.
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Dr. Sara Gottfried, M.D.

This is Step 1 of an important process: figuring out the root cause of your health issues. Once you know the area that is causing the most harm and start to treat it, you’ll be amazed at how the rest of your body starts to return to balance too. You may have felt like Bruno before...

Yeah you make feel like, I’ve been locked out of heaven
For too long, for too long

- Bruno Mars, “Locked Out of Heaven”

But not any more.

One Little Caveat

Several of the tests I’ve dished for you above are extremely reliable. Some are less so. Genetics tests, of course, don’t change. But we’ve learned a ton in the past few years about the issue of hormone resistance, which is when cells become numb to certain hormones, such as insulin. Turns out that there’s many other hormones that we become resistant to: progesterone resistance is the leading mechanism behind Premenstrual Syndrome, estrogen resistance happens in the female brain starting around age 43 (“Huh?” Exactly my point.). Glucocorticoid resistance, known in modern parlance as “cortisol resistance” is the risk of the hypervigilant women who join me in my online programs. Thyroid resistance is known to occur but the scientific details are just coming into focus.

Caveat Aside: How to Proceed (A Word about Blind Spots)

The secret sauce to measure, manage, and improve your hormonal equilibrium is this:

use these tests is to proceed in a meaningful way that best combines your values, genetic tendencies, current health, lifestyle and blind spots. Most of us need help with the latter.

Please share this list with every person you love, so they can get a taste of what’s possible with testing. I find it enriches dramatically your commitment to robust health.